# PLATTERS

## Muscle power 4 Credibility 9

### (away goals rule not required)

***DEEP PURPLE: "Stormbringer" (Purple)***

WHEN YOU weigh it up, Deep Purple are in the most unenviable of positions — they have a certain reputation to live up to, right?

Presumably in an attempt to retain the magical quality which obviously makes them more than *Another Rock and Roll Band* they've maintained certain style characteristics that unfortunately never allowed them to develop musically.

And even though they got themselves a new singer and bass player, their last album "Burn" was pretty much a predictable member of the Purple cycle, and certainly nothing innovatory.

To an extent "Stormbringer" follows a similar tactical plan.

The title track is a roaring riff of cliches, which later reappear with variations on the barren "Love Don't Mean A Thing," and the electronic groan called "Lady Double Dealer."

And the rest of the album is, well, a damn sight better, with sparks of ingenuity occasionally lighting up like a hundred Ronson electronics clicked in unison.

But the overall impression of the album is one of change: Deep Purple are slipping out of that worn and shiny cloak which was so easily recognisable.

The most distinctive facet of their new image comes with such numbers as "Hold On," "You Can't Do It Right," "High Ball Shooter" and to a lesser degree "Gypsy." All these exude a laid-back funkiness, no doubt an influence of Black Soul music.

Perhaps the key phrase to this set actually is *laid-back*.

Glenn Hughes on bass and drummer Ian Paice rock steady throughout, laying down a meaty (though strangely non-eventful), rhythmic tempo. "Holy Man" is decidedly dull, and Paice and Hughes only become inventive on the last track of side one, "Hold On."

In the same way the vocal chores of Hughes and David Coverdale complement the musical feel, except for some over-dramatisation by Coverdale which mars the finest composition of the set, "Soldier Of Fortune."

It is probably Ritchie Blackmore who commands the majority of honours for this album. He is superb, placing neat, cohesive figures into "Hold On," chopping fine rhythm patterns on "You Can't Do It Right" and easing through some deliberately mellow and refined lines on "Love Don't Mean A Thing."

And Jon Lord is so *laid back* he doesn't make any significant keyboard contributions until the third cut on side two.

More so than most of their previous albums "Stormbringer" is quite a satisfying musical excursion, despite the criticisms I've already noted, and plus the fact that the lyrics are generally very ordinary.

One should not, however, overlook the fact this is quite an adventurous album for Purple insomuch as it attempts to stay clear of tried and tested formulas.

And the result, even if flawed, does at least partly enhance their musical credibility.

**Tony Stewart**

*Ritchie Blackmore, in familiar pose*